



Meeting Notes

Landscape Focus Group Meeting

9:00 a.m. – Tuesday, July 28, 2009

APS Conference Room, 101 West Cherry Ave, Flagstaff, AZ

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Chair Gary Nelson at 9:05 a.m.

In attendance:

Ed Larsen, City of Flagstaff
Nigel Sparks, Landscape architect
Gary Nelson Citizen
Randy Groth, City of Flagstaff
Jeff Stein, Landscape architect
Roger Eastman, City of Flagstaff
Elaine Averitt, City of Flagstaff
Kim Tittelbaugh, Citizen
Melissa Klatzker, Citizen
Pam Symond, Landscape architect

2. Overview of the purpose of the Landscape Focus Group and update by the chair on the CAG meeting of July 22nd.

3. Discussion: Comments by the Group were:

- Planting standards.

- Promote a policy of using temporary irrigation systems associated with the planting of native species. This has the advantage of lowering costs and not creating a dependent system.
- Need to associate temporary irrigation systems with a specific plant list.
- Natives – look to smaller sizes rather than the current standards; too hard to get bigger sizes; there is a better success rate with smaller plants – better root to leaf ratio; ornamentals come in smaller sizes; and there is better availability.
- Too hard to get a 4" tree – better to have two 2" trees
- Ground covers need to be added to the landscape palette
- Find the right balance between deciduous and evergreen and seasonal planting needs
- Drop opacity calculations -- go with a simpler formula and perhaps less plants
- Options need to be formulated for different parts of the site – e.g. Street landscaping, foundation landscaping, parking area landscaping. Where perhaps more ground covers are planted in areas where snow is

dumped (parking islands). Also, support for the oasis concept from Tucson.

- Set up goals for the landscaping section based on the transect that allows staff/developer to formulate what is expected of landscaping per project based on where it is in the City.
 - Discussion on the issue of transplanting ponderosa pines. Consensus that it is better to plant new ones even if they are imported and smaller in size – be patient as they do grow slowly, but they have a better survival rate.
 - Discussion on the “instant gratification society” that we are! Agreement that should promote smaller trees and more ground covers (e.g. thyme, vinca, etc.). We need to educate about the need to exercise patience ...
 - City needs to employ better enforcement to require replacement of landscaping when it dies.
- Gravel/rock mulch issue (Ellen)
 - Roger – talk to Ellen and report back to the group via e-mail on her ideas.
 - Rather use organic materials than rock for unvegetated areas such as medians and landscape peninsulas/islands in parking lots. Although there was also strong support later in the meeting for adding ground cover materials in these areas instead of mulch.
 - Xeriscape Council recommendation was no gravel – recommendation was to use native grasses.
 - Create an incentive to use bark mulch rather than inorganic rock mulch because it does break down. It is important to ensure the right size so that it does not wash out (larger is better).
 - Ground cover planting is also a better solution for buffer yards in lieu of rock mulch.
 - Edible landscaping
 - Two issues – community gardens for general food production (policy to be promoted through the Regional Plan) and edible landscaping throughout the community (to be included in landscape section).

Community Gardens:

- Provides another way of dealing with local food supply issues
- City parks and other land provide opportunities for edible landscaping. Also use parks as community garden plots, e.g. Victory Gardens
- Idea - dedicate an area per neighborhood as a community garden on city park land
- Integrate the idea of gardens and edible landscaping into the schools as well – set aside areas of schools for growing food. There are already 3 youth gardens in the school district.
- Edible gardens in a multi-family residential project should be credited against the landscape needs for the project. But how would we deal with

long term maintenance and enforcement if the garden is not kept up?
Need to add a requirement for replacement landscaping if needed.

Edible Landscaping:

- There is a nationwide movement to integrate edible landscaping into landscape design, especially on publicly owned property
 - Edible landscaping is in addition to urban agriculture which is more formal
 - City parks and other land provide opportunities for edible landscaping.
 - Also possible as an element on private property – may be easier on SFR lots than commercial though?
 - Useful idea as an alternative as a buffer between commercial and industrial uses
 - Edible plants include plum and other fruit trees, berry bushes, currants, etc.
 - Impact on wildlife? There may be a need for fences to keep wildlife out of garden areas.
 - Is there a conflict with water use? Do edible landscape areas consume more water? There are ways to grow food and use minimal water. Needs to be more education on this. Use best practices to water roots only, rather than top watering. Also locate community plots in water detention/retention areas. Much less water demand than grass.
 - Edible landscaping is a way to provide a food source for the homeless.
- Tucson Code and water use
 - Tie water use into the transect based on the ideas in the Tucson code for an oasis allowance
 - Allow non-permanent irrigation systems as Tucson does. Should also be allowed in Flagstaff with an emphasis on water storage and detention in lieu of permanent irrigation systems. Need to get away from the mandate for a permanent watering system.
 - Need to continue to promote the LID code – needs to be directly cross-referenced into the zoning code.
 - Discussion on the issues with capturing runoff water from the roadway and diverting it for watering use on private property. Many potential legal and design concerns. But this idea is better applied on private property from drives and parking areas (per LID) or within the public right-of-way to provide water to medians or parkways. E.g. “Dodge diverter” on Dodge Ave. at the Mall. Demo LID project by the City – talk to David McKee.
 - Other – Users Guide/Landscape Pattern Book:
 - Suggestion to consider a users guide/pattern book for landscaping to help promote better landscape practices in Flagstaff, especially if a landscape architect is not hired. It should be more than just a list of recommended plants. Lots of photos and illustrations to capture the

essence and character of Flagstaff. Take photos of winning designs from the Xeriscape Council annual competitions.

- Build from existing pamphlets on the subject
 - Look at what Phoenix and Tucson have done.
 - Issue with resources and timing to get this done – perhaps use interns? Or tap into a gardening group in town (Master Gardeners) to get this completed?
 - Most likely a project completed after the new zoning code is adopted.
- Other – A final desire:
 - Agreement that we need to write the code to allow water harvesting, native plants with smaller sizes, more restorative landscaping, temporary irrigation systems and flexibility to allow for new ideas.
 - Promote a better environmental approach that is more sustainable as a way to attract development – e.g. Walmart.
 - Enforcement needs to be significantly upgraded to ensure that landscape materials are replaced when they die or are damaged. This is especially important in the long term with a change of property ownership.

4. Next Meeting: None. Mission accomplished! Thanks all!!

5. Adjournment: 10:35 a.m.